

WHAT IS CLAIMED:

1. A switch device for use in a flashlight comprising:
  - a housing having an electrical contact on a first end thereof and an outer wall defining an interior cavity;
  - at least one battery in said interior cavity;
  - an actuator threadedly received onto said housing;
  - a contact member disposed within said actuator having first and second electrical contacts; and
  - a plunger assembly slideably received in said actuator, said plunger being electrically conductive, said plunger movable between a first released position and a second engaged position, said plunger further including means for selectively retaining said plunger in said engaged position,
- said switch device having a fully closed position wherein said actuator is fully threaded onto said housing, said first contact of said contact member is in electrical communication with said electrical contact on said housing, said second contact member is in electrical communication with said battery and said plunger is retained in said second engaged position wherein said plunger is in electrical communication with said first and second electrical contacts on said contact member, said switch device having a selectively closed position wherein said plunger is partially depressed between said first and second positions, said plunger being in electrical communication with said first and second electrical contacts on said contact member, and said switch device having a fully open position wherein rotation of said actuator relative to said housing

causes a space between said first electrical contact on said contact member and said electrical contact on said housing.

2. The switch device of Claim 1, wherein said housing is electrically conductive.

3. The switch device of Claim 1, said plunger assembly further comprising:  
an electrically conductive tension spring disposed between said first electrical contact on said contact member and said plunger, said tension spring urging said plunger in a first direction; and

an electrically conductive contact spring in electrical communication with said second electrical contact on said contact member,

wherein a force exerted on said plunger displaces said plunger in a second direction opposite said first direction causing said plunger into electrical communication with said contact spring.

4. The switch device of Claim 3, said switch assembly further comprising:

an elastomeric cover disposed in said end cap covering said plunger.

5. The switch device of Claim 1, said means for retaining said plunger in said engaged position is a ratchet lock mechanism.

6. A flashlight assembly comprising:
  - a housing having an outer wall, a first end, a second end and an electrical contact on said first end thereof, said outer wall defining an interior cavity;
  - at least one battery in said interior cavity, said battery having a first contact and a second contact;
  - a lighting element having first and second electrical contacts, said lighting element disposed in said second end of said housing, said first electrical contact in electrical communication with said electrical contact on said housing and said second electrical contact in electrical communication with said second contact of said battery;
- and
- a switch assembly including,
  - an actuator threadedly received onto said housing;
  - a contact member disposed within said actuator having first and second electrical contacts; and
  - a plunger assembly slideably received in said actuator, said plunger being electrically conductive, said plunger movable between a first released position and a second engaged position, said plunger further including means for selectively retaining said plunger in said engaged position,
- said switch device having a fully closed position wherein said actuator is fully threaded onto said housing, said first contact of said contact member is in electrical communication with said electrical contact on said housing, said second contact member is in electrical communication with said battery and said plunger is retained in said second engaged position wherein said plunger

is in electrical communication with said first and second electrical contacts on said contact member, said switch device having a selectively closed position wherein said plunger is partially depressed between said first and second positions, said plunger being in electrical communication with said first and second electrical contacts on said contact member, and said switch device having a fully open position wherein rotation of said actuator relative to said housing causes a space between said first electrical contact on said contact member and said electrical contact on said housing.

7. The flashlight assembly of Claim 6, wherein said housing is electrically conductive.
8. The flashlight assembly of Claim 6, said switch assembly further comprising: an elastomeric cover disposed in said end cap covering said actuator.
9. The flashlight assembly of Claim 6 wherein said lighting element is a light emitting diode.
10. The flashlight assembly of Claim 6 wherein said lighting element is an array of light emitting diodes.